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INTRODUCTION

This History is prepared at the request of the Home-Coming Committee, for the Home-Coming at Sullivan, August 26-28, 1927.

In the preparation of this History much of the data has been obtained from an address given at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the settlement by Rev. C. C. Baldwin, pastor of the Congregational Church; an address given at the Seventy-fifth Anniversary by Ashley Parmely; and an address given at the Centennial by Grant Eaton.

The Histories of Ashland County by A. J. Baughman, and by George W. Hill, have been freely consulted; also Howe's Historical Collections of Ohio.

Acknowledgement is also made of assistance rendered by friends in the community.

It is hoped that this acquaintance with the hardships of the pioneers may make the present generation appreciate better the value of our heritage.

NEWTON W. BATES.

August 26, 1927.

Pennsylvania, and in 1785 a treaty was made with the Wyandots, Ottawas, Chippewas and Delawares defining their eastern border as beginning "at the mouth of the river Cuyahoga and to extend up that river to the Portage between that and the Tuscaroras branch of the Muskingum." This township was therefore in the territory held by the Indians. Later the Indian title was extinguished and the United States assumed control of all this region.

French and English

The earliest white people in this region were undoubtedly the French, who claimed the region because of the early explorations and the work of the missionaries, but ultimately they were driven out and the English held undisputed sway, transferring the title to the United States in 1783.

The Western Reserve

After the Revolution, as the tide of emigration set in toward the west, it was found that the patents granted by Charles II to Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York overlapped. To settle the difficulty these states ceded the disputed territory to the United States, except that Connecticut reserved a part, owning the land, but the jurisdiction being under the United States.

This tract of land, known as the Western Reserve of Connecticut, extends from the Pennsylvania line 120 miles west, and south to the 41st parallel of latitude. The southern line of Sullivan is the 41st parallel, and the west line of Huron and Erie counties is the western limit of the Reserve. Later the land now occupied by Huron and Erie counties, and Ruggles township, was granted to certain persons who had suffered in the Revolutionary War from fire by the British, and this tract became known as the "Firelands." Thus it will be seen that Sullivan is situated in

the region occupied first by the Indians, then by the French, then by the English, coming under control of the United States by the Revolution, and located in the southern border of the Western Reserve.

The Survey

In the original survey this township was designated as Number One, Range Eighteen; that is, it is the first township north of the 41st parallel and the eighteenth from the Pennsylvania line.

At the time of the original survey in 1796, laying out townships, this township was a part of Trumbull county, which included all of the Reserve. It was purchased from the government by two men, Wood and Howe. In 1807 it was included in the newly organized Portage county and in 1816 it was made a part of Medina county when it was again surveyed and divided into sections by Squire Baldwin of Newburg, Ohio, Sylvanus Parmely, Thomas Rice, Jesse Chamberlain and others. After the survey Parmely, Rice and Chamberlain contracted for land for themselves and returned to Vermont.

First Settlers

On the sixth day of June, 1817, a colony of thirty-six persons left their homes in Dover, Vt., and journeyed toward Sullivan, with one good span of horses, several ox teams and a few cows. They came through Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland and Medina. In this company were Abijah Mann and wife, Thomas Rice, with wife and nine children, Anna, Ruth, Chloe, Cynthia, Philena, Perez, Madison, Shalor and perhaps Lincoln; James Palmer, wife and five children, Ira, Ora, Mary, Joseph and Sarah; Jesse Chamberlain and wife; John Parmely, Sr., wife, two unmarried children,

John and Roxana, two married sons, Sylvanus, wife and four children, Manning, Lois, Louisa and Rosetta, and Asahel Parmely, wife and two children, Amandrin and Hannah.

Reaching Medina, Abijah Mann and wife, and Thomas Rice and family remained there for the winter, while the other five families went on to Harrisville, now Lodi, and from thence, chopping the road as they went, came to Sullivan on the afternoon of August 28, 1817. The youngest child of Asahel Parmely died at Medina. Each family secured 160 acres of land, casting lots to decide which section each should have, and began the erection of their log cabins.

The Close Families

About the same time that this colony left Vermont, two brothers, Benjamin and Henry Close, left their home in Cayuga county, N. Y., seeking homes in the new west. Not finding what they wanted near Cleveland they came on this way, leaving their families at Columbia, one authority says Painesville, and finally selected land in the northwest part of this township, and on the 24th of August, 1817, they began cutting logs for their cabin. On the 28th, running short of supplies they started for Harrisville and reaching the center of Sullivan they were surprised and pleased to find that they had neighbors who had that day arrived. Securing supplies here they returned to their task, and the next day, with the help of their new neighbors, erected their dwelling, afterwards putting on the roof, cutting out the windows and constructing the puncheon floor. Returning to Columbia for their families, they arrived in Sullivan on the 8th of October, and on the 10th Benjamin Close and family commenced living in the first dwelling erected in this town. James Palmer had erected a cabin

meanwhile and moved in, so his was the first dwelling occupied. The settlers at the center lived in their wagons until their log houses were completed.

Other Settlers

Other settlers came in soon, Whitney Chamberlain and family, Rhesa Close and family, Richard Chamberlain and mother, John, Enos and Rufus Gould and their families, Aretas Marsh, Mr. Durfee, George Mann, Sr., and family, and others.

The Name

Sullivan township took its name from General John Sullivan, a General of the Revolution and especially famous for a campaign against the Indians of western New York. It was organized as a township in 1819, belonging at that time to Medina County. When Lorain County was organized, Dec. 26, 1822, Sullivan was transferred to Lorain County, and in 1846, when Ashland County was formed, Sullivan was attached to this county.

Trials of the Pioneers

There are many interesting stories of the trials of the early settlers. The party that surveyed the township in 1812 had to swim rivers and suffer from lack of supplies. Indians were frequent, and usually unwelcome visitors, but no serious harm was done to the settlers of this place by them. James Palmer was lost over night in the woods, much to his distress and that of his friends who organized a searching party, but he returned safe the next forenoon. A small son of Mr. Durfee was lost in the woods and his bones found the next spring.

Log Cabins

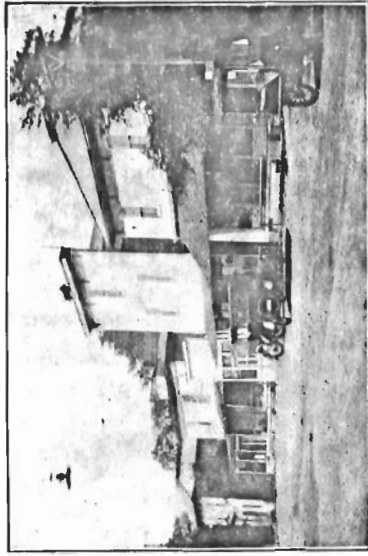
The houses of the settlers were lacking in all modern conveniences. Doors were of bark, a bed-

quilt, or rough hewn plank, with a wooden latch, which could be raised from the outside by a string put through a small hole. To lock the door one had only to pull in the latch-string. Thus the expression "the latch-string is out" means today that you are welcome. Windows were small and oiled paper was used instead of glass. Floors were of clay or sometimes of puncheon, that is, split logs smoothed with the ax and fitted roughly together.

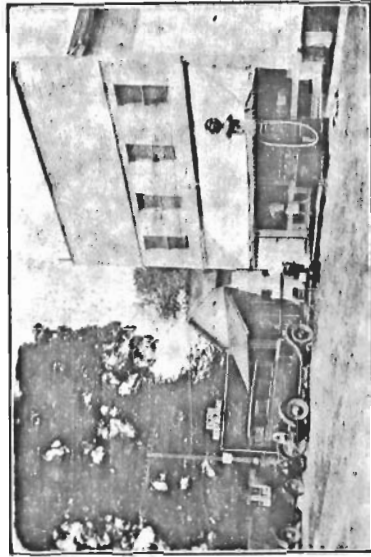
The fireplace was built of rough stones and the chimney of sticks daubed with mud. As fuel was abundant, great fires could be kept burning in the fireplaces, with the result that it was very hot in front of the fire, while the cold air came whistling in through the chinks in the logs. The smoke which was supposed to go up the chimney sometimes came out in the room in a most uncomfortable way. With few, if any, chairs, seats were made from blocks sawed the required height. A few brought tables from their Vermont homes, but more used as a table the family chest that held the extra clothing, or a rough table of hewn plank. The beds were made by driving poles into holes bored in the logs and supporting the other end on forked sticks driven down into the ground between the puncheons. On these poles strips of elm bark were laid, and our ancestors slept as soundly as we do on mattress and springs. Cupboards and pantry were simply split plank roughly hewn and placed on pins driven into holes in the logs, on which the wooden trenchers or pewter porringers and platters were placed.

Mills

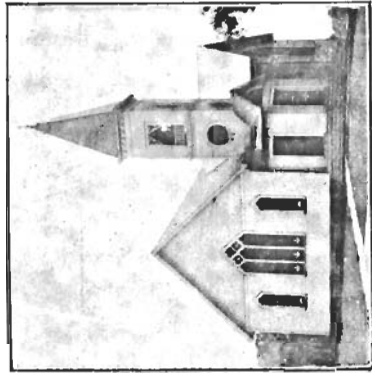
Corn and grain were pounded in a wooden mortar, often hollowed out of a stump, with a pestle sometimes attached to an overhang-



MAIN STREET



MAIN STREET



CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ing limb. The nearest grist mills were at Harrisville or Elyria. It is on record that it took Benjamin Close five days to make the trip to Harrisville and back and get a load of corn ground. Sullivan's first grist mill was run by ox power, four yoke of oxen being needed, and the mill was entirely constructed of wood. In 1830 Captain Parmely erected a large mill, combining grist mill, saw mill and carding mill. The mill stones used in this mill are at the north entrance to the village cemetery.

Food

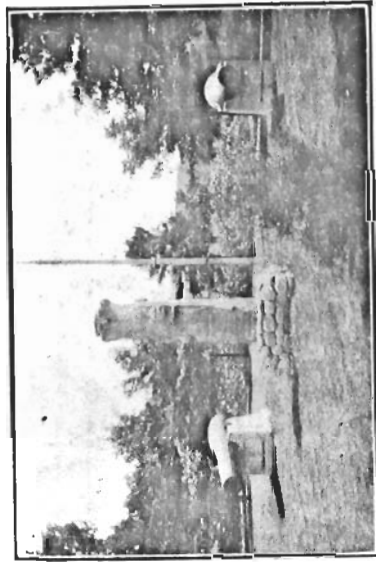
The food was as simple as the furniture. Wheat flour was kept for company or sickness, while corn dodgers, made of pounded corn and water with a little salt, served for bread. Milk, butter and cheese were at hand, if the cows did not stray too far in the woods, so that they could not be found at milking time. Mush and milk, using the same kind of pounded corn meal, was also a staple dish. Game was abundant, deer, bear, turkeys and smaller game being found readily by the hunter. In their time berries, wild plums, wild cherries, crab apples and other fruits were at hand, and nuts could be gathered for winter cracking.

Dress

The family clothing was mostly woven and made at home. A calico dress was a luxury and a new butternut suit, that is, homespun from flax grown in their own field and colored with butternut bark, was the pride of the gay youth.

Pleasures

Social pleasures were not lacking, but were usually combined with helpful labor; thus, quiltings for the women, log rolling for the men,



SULLIVAN PARK

corn husking for men and women, especially enjoyed by the young people who were eagerly watching for the red ear of corn, were frequent gatherings much appreciated by all.

Large Families

Large families were the rule and ten or a dozen children in the family were not uncommon and were a matter of pride. The raising of men and women seemed to them the most valuable service to the world, and the quality of men and women produced in these early days is the best proof that they were correct in their views.

Births, Marriages and Deaths

The first white person born in Sullivan was Ashley Parmely, born February 21, 1818, who spent his entire life in this township. He lived to give an address at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the settlement of the town. Deborah Anna Close, Lincoln Rice, Silvia Parmely and Olive Chamberlain were born soon after.

The first marriage was that of Richard Chamberlain to Roxana Parmely, or Sylvester Ross and Cynthia Rice according to another authority.

The first death was John Parmely, Jr., and the second Miranda, daughter of Whitney Chamberlain.

Market Prices

As there was little market for their produce, prices were low. Wheat was 25 cents a bushel, oats 6 to 8 cents, corn 6 to 12 cents; cows were \$5 to \$8 a head, and horses \$20 to \$25 a head; eggs were 3 or 4 cents a dozen, butter 4 to 5 cents a pound and cheese 5 cents a pound.

June 5, 1859 there was a killing frost, and again July 4 and August 11 and 28. As a result most of the crops were a total failure.

First Election

The first election was held in Sullivan May 27, 1819, at which the following officers were elected: John Hooker, clerk; John Parmely, constable; Henry Close, Whitney Chamberlain and Ira Palmer, trustees; Jesse Chamberlain, treasurer; John Laboree, Simeon Munson and Ira Palmer, supervisors; Abraham Hendry and Nathan Hoyt, fence viewers; Benjamin Close, overseer of the poor; Rhessa Close, appraiser of property; Henry Close, justice.

Growth

The first postmaster was John Gould, mail coming by the Ashland-Oberlin hack line. Rural delivery was established October 1, 1903.

In the stage coach days a hotel stood where the Congregational church now stands. Here the Oberlin-Ashland stage changed horses. The arrival of the stage was the great event of the day.

In the late forties an attempt was made to organize a new county, with Sullivan as the county seat. In anticipation of this event, Porter, Hall & Fox came on from the east and built the large store building now owned by the Masons, the first store building of importance in the town. While the plan for Sullivan as a county seat did not materialize, the town has been an excellent trading point from that time to the present.

By the sixties dairying had become the leading industry, most of the milk being made into cheese at home. In 1868 the first cheese factory was erected on the river north and one mile east, known as the Drake-Eaton factory, as high as 25,000 pounds of milk being received daily. At this time, this part of the Western Reserve was the great cheese market of the country.

The need of a railroad was greatly felt, and in 1889 the Baltimore & Ohio made a proposition

Methodist

A Methodist church was organized in the early days, the building standing across from the present Congregational church. Little of its history is available. It passed out of existence soon after the Civil War. A Methodist church just across the line in Orange township, known as the Hope-well church, was largely supported by members living in the southwest part of Sullivan, and when it was discontinued, about 1897, these members united with the Sullivan Congregational church.

Congregational

The Sullivan Congregational church was organized September 1, 1835, by Revs. John McCrae and Joel Talcott, with fourteen members, as follows: Charles C. Slocum and Eliza, his wife; Archibald Cummings and Elizabeth, his wife; Rice Bowker and Betsy, his wife; Deborah Mead, Anna Ross, Henry M. Close, Cornelius M. Slocum, Henry Brown, Benjamin Close and Elizabeth his wife, and William Mead. This church prospered for some years, then had its period of decline, and again entered an era of prosperity, which has continued to the present time. For many years it occupied the building now standing on the street in the northwest corner of the village, but in 1905 the present commodious structure was erected, and the beautiful parsonage in 1914.

The oldest members of the church are George and Sarah (Goodyear) French, who united with the church, he in 1863 and she in 1865, and they have been singing in the choir ever since; and Garrett A. Johnson, who united in 1871.

At the semi-centennial of the town, Rev. C. C. Baldwin, then pastor of the Congregational church, wrote a history of the town, from which many of the facts herein given are derived.

Christian Church

The Church of Christ was organized June 3, 1838 with fifteen members, Sylvanus Parmely, Lois Parmely, Lois Parmely, Jr., Rosetta Parmely, Louisa Campbell, Sylva Parmely, R. J. Stevenson, Lucia Stevenson, Crosby Rider, Sarah Rider, Milo Carleton, John P. Mann, J. C. Bowker, Rhoda E. Knowlton and Nathan Gorham. The oldest members of the church at present, counting years of membership are Mrs. Anna Clark who has been a member 45 years; Merritt Rogers, united 53 years ago but has not had continuous membership; Andrew and Millie Arndt, 43 and 44 years. The first church building was located in the south street, north of the north entrance to the cemetery. The present building was erected about 1895.

Other Churches

A Wesleyan Methodist church was organized here in the early days, but there are no records of it. It was extinct before the time of Rev. C. C. Baldwin, who writes of it in 1867 as disbanded.

An organization of the Church of the Brethren existed for some years in the northeast part of the town, holding services in a barn. Later this organization was moved to the new church in West Homer.

Public Men

Sullivan has furnished her share of public men. One United States Senator, Edmund G. Ross of Kansas, came from Sullivan. Several ministers have gone to their work from this town, among them Henry M. Close, Jr., Benjamin Close and Newell J. Close, Methodist ministers; Charles Tanner and Mack Harvout of the Christian Church; and later, Charles W. Mayes, a minister of the Brethren Church. Lawyers